

# Broad Channel

a future land use proposal



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# Broad Channel

a future land use proposal



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING • AUGUST 1962





THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

HERBERT A. POSNER

January 24, 1969

Mr. Edwin Friedman  
Assistant Director  
Office of Planning Coordination  
1841 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10023

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Thank you for remembering to send me a copy of the report which you wrote in 1962 on Broad Channel for the City Planning Commission.

The current Jamaica Bay bill is in the process of being amended so as to include your director as an advisor to the commission and to make other amendments in accordance with our discussion at your office. As soon as the amended version of the bill is printed I will send you a few copies for further comments and criticism.

One of these days I would very much like to have lunch with you to discuss certain aspects of the New York City Planning Commission. May I take the liberty of calling you sometime in February.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive ink that reads "Herbert A. Posner".

Herbert A. Posner  
Member of Assembly

HAP/lrg



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<sup>\*</sup>Number refers to page of text preceding map.



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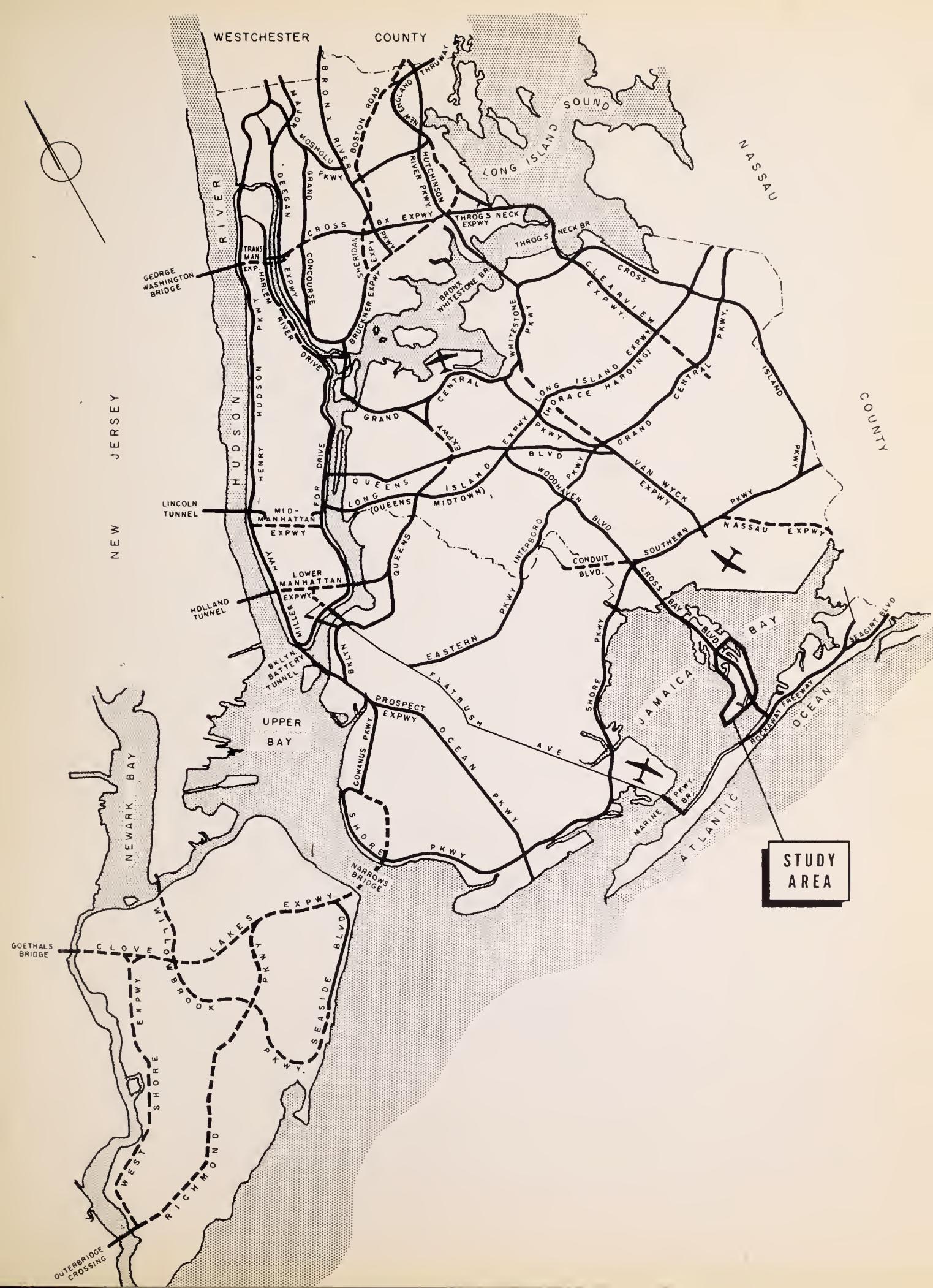
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## A PROPOSAL FOR BROAD CHANNEL

### Introduction

On April 30, 1963 the five-year ground leases will terminate on Broad Channel. Entirely City-owned, the island is now occupied mainly by residences of which a third are dilapidated or deteriorating. With the expiration of the leases the City will be presented with a prime opportunity to maximize the extraordinary potential of this island.

Broad Channel was acquired through in rem proceedings in the late 1930's and has been in City ownership since that time. The previous owner was the Joseph P. Day real estate interests.

Possible alternative land uses for the area have been discussed with staff members of the Community Renewal Program. In the discussions and in subsequent studies two overriding considerations have manifested themselves. The first of these is the proximity of International Airport and Floyd Bennett Field, and the second is the complex sewage and water pollution problem affecting the island and the surrounding Jamaica Bay area. The island also is subject to frequent flooding, particularly at moontide.

The critical location of Broad Channel in relation to the two nearby airports is in itself the most compelling argument against residential development. The pollution problem, while not insurmountable, will be a long-range and expensive undertaking the solution to which could be expedited in terms of time and financing through a rational proposal for Broad Channel. The cost of the sewage program has been estimated at upward of \$40 million.

We are convinced on the basis of our studies that Broad Channel, intelligently and imaginatively handled, could contribute greatly to the



solution of one of the City's most critical needs - that for recreational space. The proposal presented here offers the opportunity for handling two related urgent needs of the City so that they aid each other in a mutual solution. The proposed recreational development would expedite construction of the crucial water pollution control installations, and this in turn would permit the City to realize an important part of its recreational potential. The installations are long overdue; and, according to a recent regional study, unless New York City gets on with this marginal sewage program its recreational potential will be in serious jeopardy.<sup>1/</sup> The proposed recreational development would provide revenue and impetus for advancing the sewage program.

A recreation area here also would be much more compatible with the nearby airports than the present use. Information received informally from the Port of New York Authority indicates that they would welcome recreational development of the type proposed.

The proposed plan in many respects represents a logical land use in contrast to the present marginal use of Broad Channel. It would also integrate with, and complement, current proposals of the Park Department for the treatment of Jamaica Bay, including proposed map changes to provide four new park areas for Broad Channel, and at the same time strengthen the City's tax base.



STUDY AREA





General Description of Area

Jamaica Bay with all of its islands comprises some 18,000 acres of water, land under water, marsh, and meadowland, and is divided about in half by the Brooklyn-Queens Borough Line. The Brooklyn portion is a part of Census Tract 702 for that borough and is totally unpopulated. The Queens portion includes all of Queens Census Tract 1072 and contains whatever population there is in the area; Broad Channel is part of this census tract.

Broad Channel is the largest island above water in Jamaica Bay. The high portions, though subject to flooding, stretch over a length of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles and more than  $1/3$  mile across the island at its widest point. Precise measurement of its area would depend on what is determined or defined as land, land under water, and marsh. As of 1960 the island's mapped land area, including marshes, comprised approximately 320 acres. Its mapped bulkhead lines circumscribe about 500 acres which at present include some land under water. Ongoing land-fill operations, however, are continually adding to the land area, and presumably will be extended to the bulkhead lines ultimately.

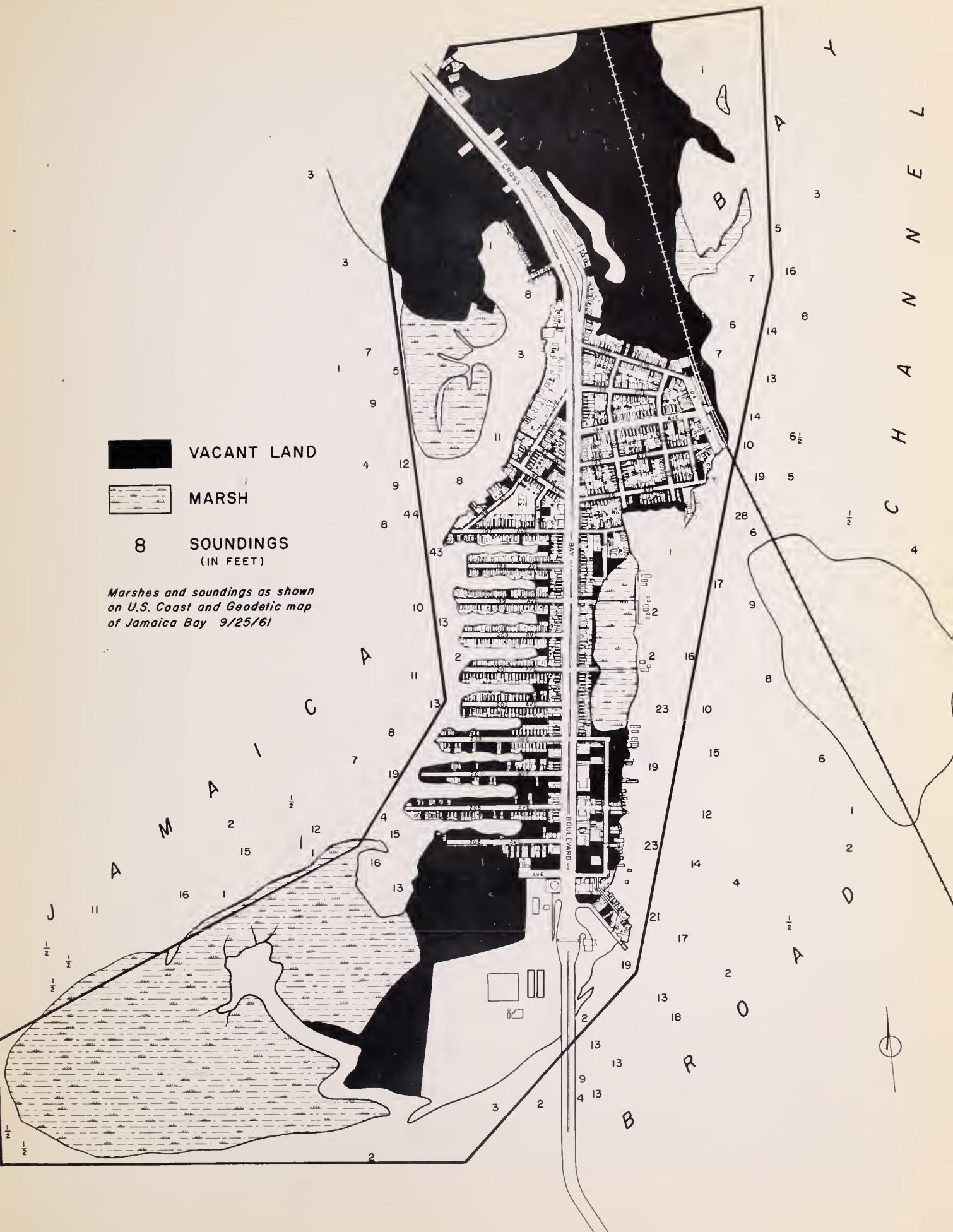
In 1960 more than half the 320 acres of land and marsh were vacant, most of this undeveloped:

Land Use of Broad Channel, 1960\*

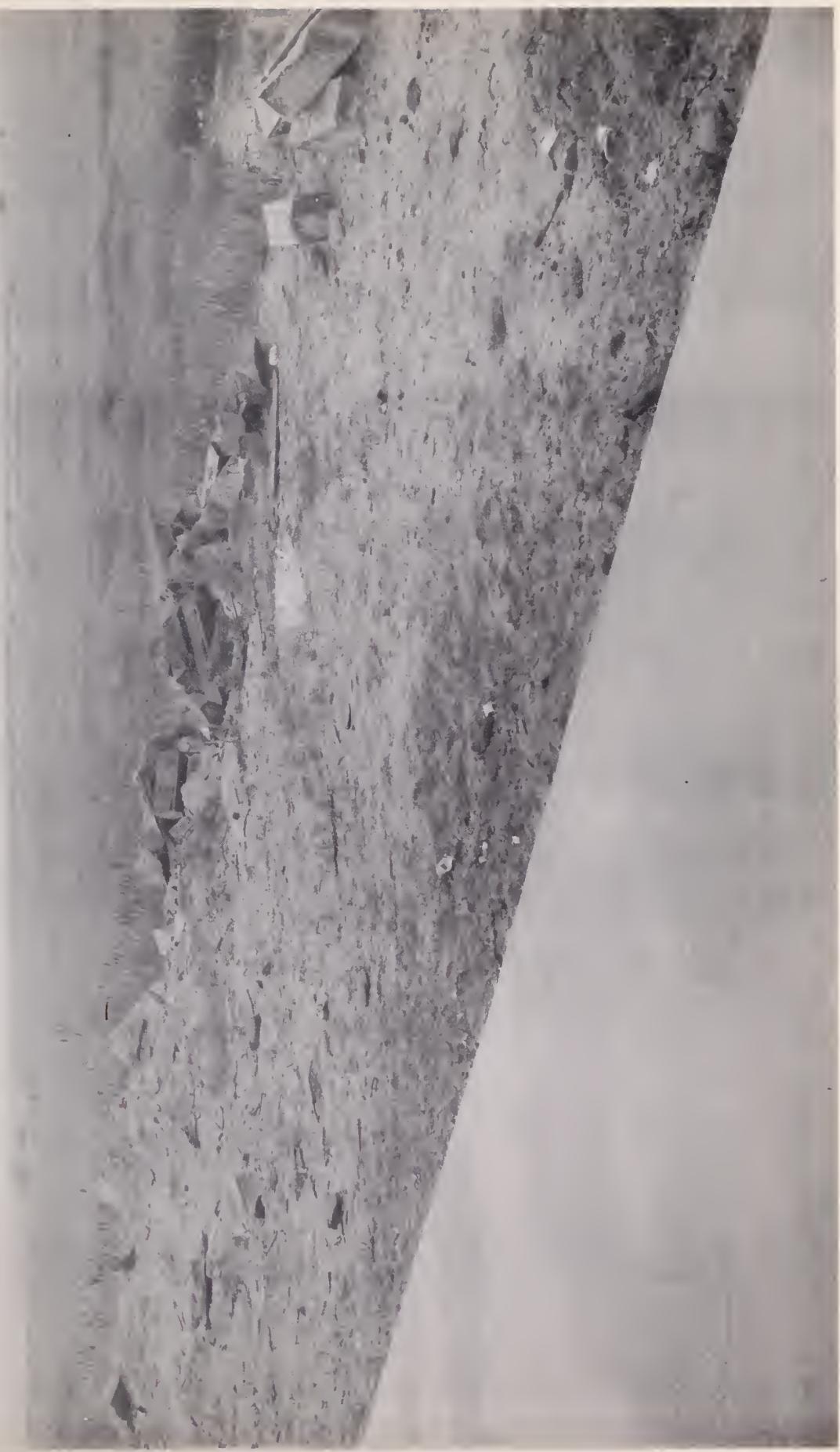
<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Vacant	172	54
Streets	92	29
Residential	45	14
Non-Residential	11	3
Total	320	100.0

\*Estimated from: a. Sanborn data for C.T. Q1072, and  
b. Planimeter measurements









1. Marsh, looking out toward IND trestle.  
Foreground shows filled-in area.



Although developed residentially, the island serves primarily as a transportation link with the Rockaways. A major artery of the City, Cross Bay Boulevard, traverses the full length of the island. The Independent Rapid Transit Line (Rockaway Division) crosses the north-eastern portion and has a station located at 192nd Avenue and West 104th Street.

Along with all the other land and water area in Jamaica Bay, Broad Channel is owned by the City of New York. However, only this island is administered by the Department of Real Estate. All the rest of the area is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks. The Department of Marine and Aviation has jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to the shoreline, including building permits.

#### Population, Land Use and Fiscal Considerations

For practical purposes, Broad Channel is the only one of the islands with residents. The 1960 Census records show that it had a year-round total population of 2,848. Two neighboring islands, both also located in Census Tract Q1072, were shown in the census tabulation as having a total of 30 residents in 18 housing units. However, the Department of Parks representative in the area states there are now no residents outside of Broad Channel except his own immediate family living just north of Broad Channel, off Cross Bay Boulevard.

According to the 1960 Census report, the island contained approximately 1,000 housing units. More than 70 per cent were owner-occupied, and these ranged as high in value as \$10,500, with the average at \$9,000. 147 units were renter-occupied, for which the average contract





2. Typical street.





3. Catwalk for housing on piles



rent paid to owners was \$65 per month. About 160 units were vacant.

The records of the Department of Real Estate show a total of 3,011 lots which it handles on Broad Channel (some under water), 1,189 of which are listed as improved and 1,822 as vacant. The improved lots contain 161 commercial and 1,047 residential structures and include summer homes and boarded-up homes that are undoubtedly shown as vacant housing units in the census count. About 350 of the lots are under water; and more than two-thirds of these are "improved" with residential structures built on wooden piles extending out over the water.

Homeowners pay to the Department of Real Estate annually a ground rent plus a charge for water and refuse collection. Individual payments for ground rent generally amount to \$75 or \$100 yearly per lot, depending on location. About 70 per cent of the owners pay \$75; the 30 per cent who pay \$100 own the homes of higher value that are situated mainly along Cross Bay Boulevard. A few pay as high as \$125. The water and refuse collection charge is a flat \$16 per year for each unit. Thus the few two-family dwellings pay \$32.

Commercial owners generally pay a ground rent of \$100. For two-story commercial structures the rate ranges as high as \$200. They also pay the same fixed water and refuse collection charge of \$16 yearly except for large users who have separate water meters and pay according to readings, and who make their own arrangements for refuse collection. The metered water payments are handled outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Real Estate, through the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, on the basis of bills prepared by and paid to the City Collector.





4. Typical housing on piles.





5. Street intersection.



The Broad Channel Day Camp, Inc. occupies the largest tract of any tenant on the island - about 20 acres. Its tenancy is different from that of the others in that occupancy here is on a month-to-month basis and, in addition to the land, it also rents its buildings from the City. For this, a total rental of \$700 per month is paid to the Department of Real Estate. Water usage is metered and refuse collection handled privately. The buildings and equipment appear to be well-maintained. The day camp is clearly seen in the foreground of the aerial photograph on the cover. Summer 1962 enrollment is estimated by the camp's owner as approximately 525 children, for each of whom the fee for the season averages \$275, exclusive of transportation costs.

The rents and water and refuse collection charges represent the only revenue the City receives from its ownership of Broad Channel. For the fiscal year 1962-63 the Department of Real Estate has calculated that it will collect a total of \$123,757.71.

New York City Department of Real Estate

Revenue, Fiscal Year, 1962-63  
Broad Channel

Ground Rents	\$106,156.17
Water and Refuse Collection Charges	<u>17,601.54</u>
Total Revenue	\$123,757.71

On the basis of the census data, the revenue thus is \$43.46 per capita and \$123.76 per housing unit per annum. These figures do not include the relatively small amount for the metered water payments that are made to the City Collector.





6. An example of deteriorating housing.





7. Abandoned dwelling.



No taxes are collected by the City on these buildings, although assessed valuations for them are published. For 1961-62 the listings show:

Assessed Valuation of Real Estate, 1961-62  
Broad Channel

	<u>Buildings</u>	<u>Land and Buildings</u>
Non-Exempt	\$2,642,200	\$4,602,200
Exempt	<u>1,074,490</u>	<u>1,246,840</u>
Total	\$3,716,690	\$5,849,040

The 1960 Census shows that nearly one-third of the houses were dilapidated or deteriorating at the time the census was taken. This percentage could conceivably be higher now since nearly all of the dwellings are one-family frame structures built prior to 1935.

The houses for the most part are simple structures with relatively primitive waste disposal facilities. None have cellars. Water is supplied by the City through a main that runs along Cross Bay Boulevard, and the individual owners make their own connections to this. There are no sewers. Disposal is handled by the use of septic tanks, treatment with chemicals, or cess pools, all of which contribute untreated sewage to the further pollution of Jamaica Bay. According to the Departments of Marine and Aviation and Real Estate, it is reasonable to assume that raw sewage and effluent are either discharged directly or seep into the surrounding waters. The sewage map shows the numerous outlets that empty directly into the Bay.

The island is also subject to flooding. Twice each month when the water level is at its peak, at moontide, the entire island except









8. Open storm sewer.





9. "The beach".



for an area along Cross Bay Boulevard between 203rd and 205th Avenues is inundated. A number of open storm sewers handle the run-off. For a variety of reasons these usually exist as stagnant, malodorous pools. Such pools can be seen at any time. An example is shown in the photograph.

Information received informally from the Department of Real Estate representative indicates that the Health Department is currently inquiring into conditions on Broad Channel. A staff of inspectors has been sent out to investigate and report back on sanitary and general health conditions on the island.

On the Master Plan of Development of the New York City Department of City Planning, Broad Channel is shown as a declining area with a high degree of negative physical characteristics, and designated as a Redevelopment Section. On this Plan an area is termed "declining" where, among other negative characteristics, 25 per cent or more of the housing units are deteriorating or dilapidated according to the 1960 U.S. Census.

The median income of the population in this census tract is \$6,030 for families, and \$5,537 for families plus unrelated individuals. For New York City as a whole comparable income figures are \$6,091 and \$5,103 respectively. As compared with the City, the Broad Channel median incomes thus are one per cent lower for families, and nine per cent higher for families plus unrelated individuals.

Median Income, 1960

	Broad Channel (Ct Q1072)	New York City	Difference Amount	Difference Percent
Families	\$6,030	\$6,091	- \$ 61	- .01
Families Plus Unrelated Individuals	5,537	5,103	+ 434	+ .09

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960.



On the basis of these figures it would appear that the income of these residents is such that they can afford to pay about the same amount for housing as the average family in the City does.

Community Facilities

The Broad Channel population is served by relatively few community facilities, a major proportion of which are private in nature:

Schools

P.S. 47 (Annex to P.S. 44, Far Rockaway), Power and Shad Creek Roads. Constructed 1957. Occupies about one acre. Accommodates 140 pupils in grades K-6.

St. Virgilius Parish School (Catholic Parochial), 16 Noel Road. Constructed 1926. Accommodates about 350 pupils in grades 1-8.

Churches

St. Virgilius (C), 740 Cross Bay Boulevard

Christ Presbyterian (P), Noel and Church Roads

Christ Church by the Sea (Interdenom.), 100 Noel Road

New York City Fire Department

Volunteer Fire Department, 15 Noel Road

New York City Transit Authority

Transit Substation, 192nd Avenue and 104th Street

Express Station on Rockaway IND. Line, 194th Avenue

New York City Department of Parks

Public playground, including baseball diamond, 99th Street North of 189th Avenue.



Potential Land Use

Whatever the future use of Broad Channel is to be, the airports and the complex sewage and water pollution problems that exist here will be factors to contend with. An over-all elevation in grade for the entire island will also be necessary because of the frequent flooding.

In considering future land use alternatives, obviously the continuation and expansion of residences is one possibility. Among non-residential uses, recreation is an alternative that appears to offer exceptional opportunities for the area and for the City.

Residential use of Broad Channel has a number of basic disadvantages, and conflicts with master planning considerations. The proximity of International Airport less than two miles to the northeast and Floyd Bennett Field about three miles to the west is one compelling reason against residential use of this area. As the noise and hazards connected with growing jet travel increase, the island will be rendered an even less desirable place to live in the future. Since at best any residential development here would have to remain small, the unit cost to provide adequate community facilities would be relatively high. The provision of the improvements necessary to achieve minimum standards here would involve considerable capital costs. In the meantime the City has an urgent need to proceed with its marginal sewage and pollution control program.





10. Typical catwalk over water.



Residential development here also is likely to have an increasingly adverse effect on airport operations. Of all land use combinations, residences and airports in close proximity are the most incompatible. The higher-density communities already established along International Airport's other borders for some time now have been exerting pressure on the Airport to make changes that will eliminate noise and hazards objectionable to them, and these would directly affect airport operations.

On the basis of information received informally from the Port of New York Authority, current schedules at International Airport show concentrations of plane takeoffs at certain peak periods during the day. Some of these peaks are reflected in the following list of takeoffs for April 20, 1962, a typical day:

Peak Periods  
of  
Plane Takeoffs at International Airport  
New York City  
April 20, 1962

<u>Time</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Takeoffs</u>
<u>A.M.***</u>	
9-10	32
***	
<u>P.M.***</u>	
4-5	21
5-6	27
6-7	29
7-8	21
8-9	15
***	



Although present flight plans officially do not call for flights directly over Broad Channel, field observation confirms that planes actually fly over the island, noisily and at low altitudes. The frequency of deviation from official flight patterns most likely is determined by weather and wind conditions. In its future plans the Airport has included a proposal for the extension of one runway (Runway 422) into Jamaica Bay a distance ranging from 500 feet to possibly 1,300 feet. The extension, if it should be accomplished, would continue the runway eastward of Broad Channel.

The Port of New York Authority is concerned about residences this close to airports. Next to uses such as agriculture or cemeteries, the Authority would welcome recreational use in such areas.

The United States Naval Air Station at Floyd Bennett Field averages 125 to 150 flight movements per day on weekends and 30 to 40 daily during the week. At present half of these involve jet planes. Peak periods at this field are indicated in the following table:



Peak Periods  
of  
Flight Movements at U.S. Naval Air Station,  
Floyd Bennett Field,  
on Flight Days, 1962

Time

A.M.\*\*\*

8-9:30 Outgoing flights  
11:30-12 Return

P.M.\*\*\*

1-2 Outgoing flights  
4-6 Return

These flight activities operate mainly over the northwestern part of Jamaica Bay, to keep away from the International Airport approach. One of Bennett Field's runways does send planes directly over Broad Channel, but this is used only occasionally.

The recent decision of the United States Supreme Court upholding damages to a property owner resulting from the adverse effect of airport noise illustrates the need to exercise care in locating residences in relation to airports.

Other land considerably more suitable than Broad Channel for its type of residential development is available elsewhere in the City. Such space is available even in this general vicinity, in neighboring communities in Howard Beach and the Rockaways.



A decision to use Broad Channel for recreation purposes would present New York City with an exceptional opportunity to maximize the potential of this island and also to coordinate it with existing and proposed uses of the surrounding area in meeting critical needs of the City. Undesirable for residential use because of the proximity of the airports, the limited population that could be accommodated, and the impracticability of providing adequate facilities for a small residential development which at best would be of dubious value to residents, to say nothing of its adverse effect on the airports, this island becomes a huge asset when contemplated for recreational purposes.



For this, Broad Channel has many advantages:

1. The land is City-owned.
2. A commercial recreational development on part of the island, offering among others the facilities of a playland, would provide substantial revenue which could be applied toward the cost of the necessary sewage and water pollution control installations, to serve not only Broad Channel but also the "natural state" and other recreation areas of Jamaica Bay. These installations are long overdue. The Park, Recreation and Open Space Project has stated:

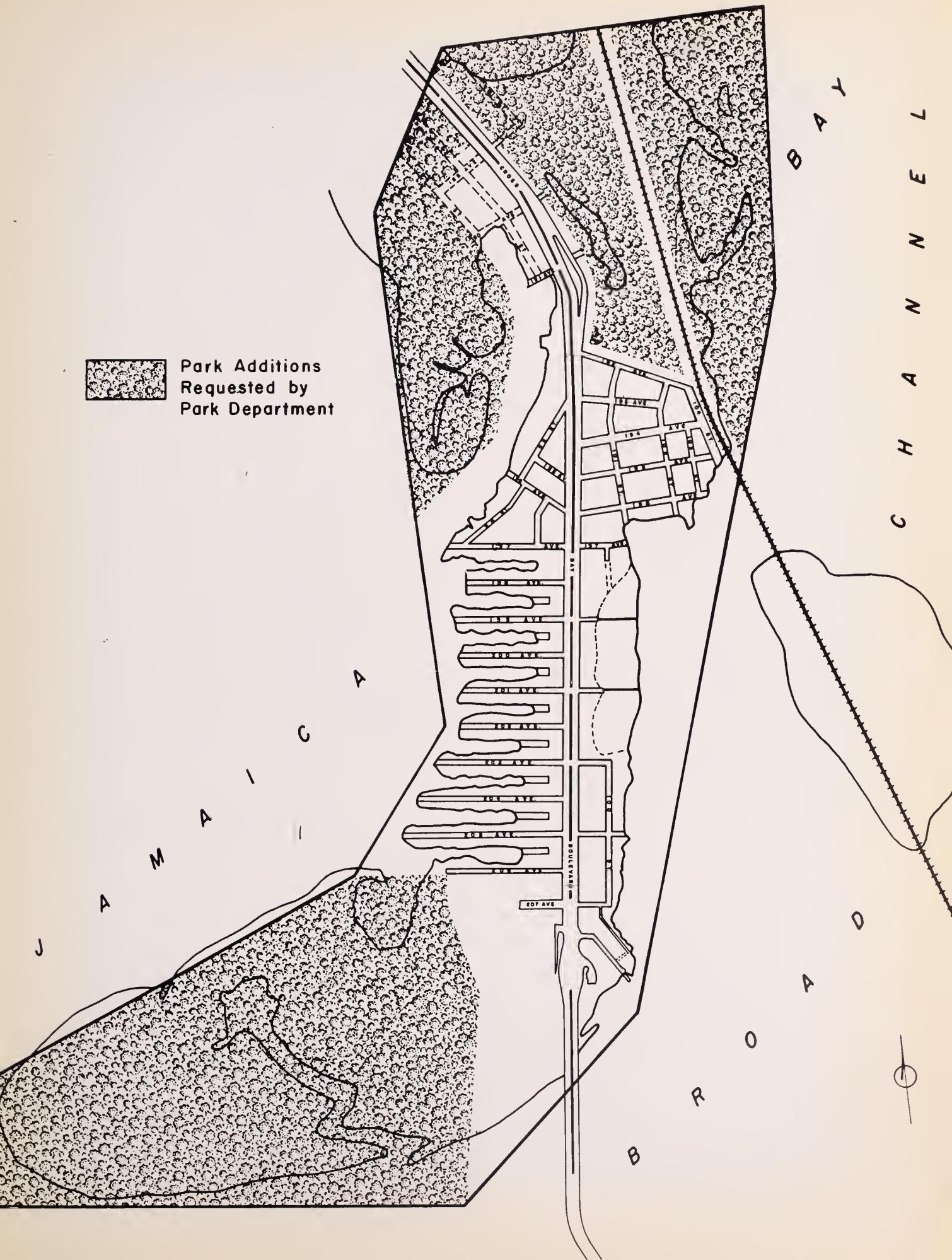


"New York City's recreational potential will be in serious jeopardy unless it gets on with its marginal sewage program."<sup>2</sup>





**Park Additions  
Requested by  
Park Department**





3. A recreational development here would tie in with Park Department plans for the general area and thus provide integrated facilities for entire Jamaica Bay and the land areas surrounding it, such as Canarsie Beach Park, Spring Creek Park, and Marine Park, in addition to the four new proposed park areas on Broad Channel itself.

4. Its location is ideal for one-day trips in particular.

5. Transportation facilities already exist for accommodating large numbers of visitors to the area, either by automobile or by rapid transit. Water transport could also be provided.

6. So far as the airports are concerned, recreational development on Broad Channel would be far more compatible with airport operation than residences or most other uses.



#### Demand for Recreation Space

Consideration of Broad Channel for recreation purposes is more than just timely. Here is a precious opportunity to help meet an unfulfilled need which is becoming increasingly more acute. As part of the social and technological development of our time new stepped-up demands for recreation are continually being generated, basically by the increase in four factors:

1. Population
2. Income
3. Leisure time
4. Ability to travel.

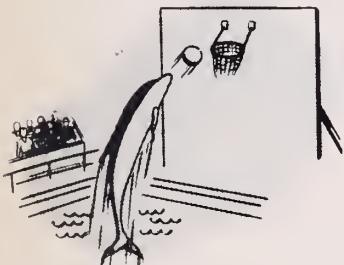


The problem is aggravated because there is not now sufficient space to meet existing needs. Parks simply are not being provided as fast as the population is growing. But comparison with population does not tell the story of how far behind we really are, for population alone does not indicate how much park land is needed. As the recent Park, Recreation and Open Space Project study pointed out: "The rate of growth in the population's demand for parks far exceeds population growth itself. And land development, which is directly related to the availability of land for parks, is increasing from four to six times as fast as population."<sup>3/</sup>



And for the future the demands will be considerably greater:

"The demand for all forms of outdoor recreation will increase at an unprecedented pace during the next 25 years in the New York Metropolitan Region, and in the United States as a whole. There will be a substantial rise in each of the factors which most affect the demand for recreation: population, per capita income, leisure time, and ease of travel. Growth in any one of these separate factors would be significant; when their gains are combined the impact on the need for parks and other open space becomes a major challenge of our time."<sup>4/</sup>



The Park, Recreation and Open Space Project places the responsibility for obtaining and preserving open space for recreation purposes primarily on the local governments, and calls attention to the danger of delay:

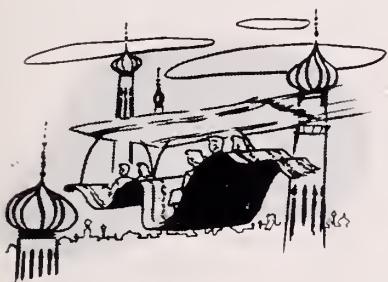
"Parks, recreation and open space are an essential part of the business of local government. As demand for recreation goes up and land runs out, the pressure to deal adequately with these functions will mount. Inevitably recreation and open space will take a bigger slice of public expenditure, even as leisure expenditure is becoming an increasingly prominent item in the average family budget.



Any delay in the realization of these facts will be costly as the price of land rises. One of the key tests of government, and certainly local government, will be whether it has the leadership, the vision and the plain good sense to come to grips with the open space problem before it is too late."5/

In the case of Broad Channel, the responsibility lies essentially in developing an area already City-owned which has a choice recreational potential.

Though the expected growth will be accompanied by a demand for recreation space of all kinds, the need will be especially great for areas situated within 1/2 to 2 hours travel time from home that can provide for all-day outings.



"While past and future increases in these factors have a significance for all forms of recreation, their effect on all-day outings is much greater than on local recreation. If people have more time, more money, and more automobiles, they will look outward for their outdoor recreation . . ."6/

So far as New York City is concerned, the Project points out that there is literally no physical space in the City to serve the all-day recreation needs of the people of New York.7/ The exclusion of New Yorkers from Westchester County recreation areas in recent years is one example of the inadvisability of expecting to meet this need in the parks of neighboring counties. As the Project states, the answer is simply more parks:

"Several counties and municipalities in the Region either restrict the use of their parks to their own residents or permit non-residents to use park facilities at a higher fee. Since these restricted parks are for the most part used to their capacity, opening them up to all comers on an equal basis would not solve the basic problem: shortage of parks. The only answer to park restrictions is more parks. . ."8/

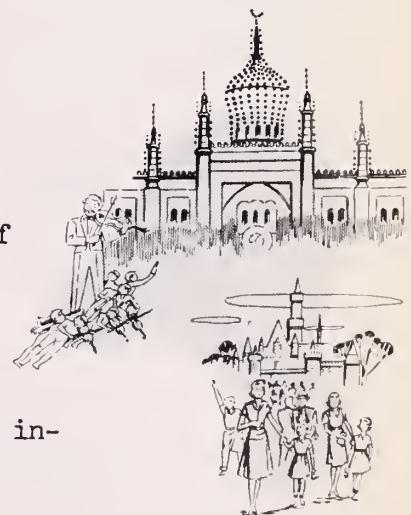


Broad Channel is especially suitable for filling this demand in New York City.

The fact that Broad Channel offers the possibility for New Yorkers to reach an all-day recreation area via rapid transit if they so desire is another most important consideration. By and large the direction of all-day recreation demand is generally symbolized by the automobile, and the core counties of the New York Metropolitan Region thus are faced with the prospect of a population with more cars and more personal income but no land left on which to provide the all-day recreation facilities which will be demanded. Broad Channel can be an exception to this frustrating combination of factors since here at least the land is already City-owned and the area is easily accessible by existing mass rapid transit if desired.

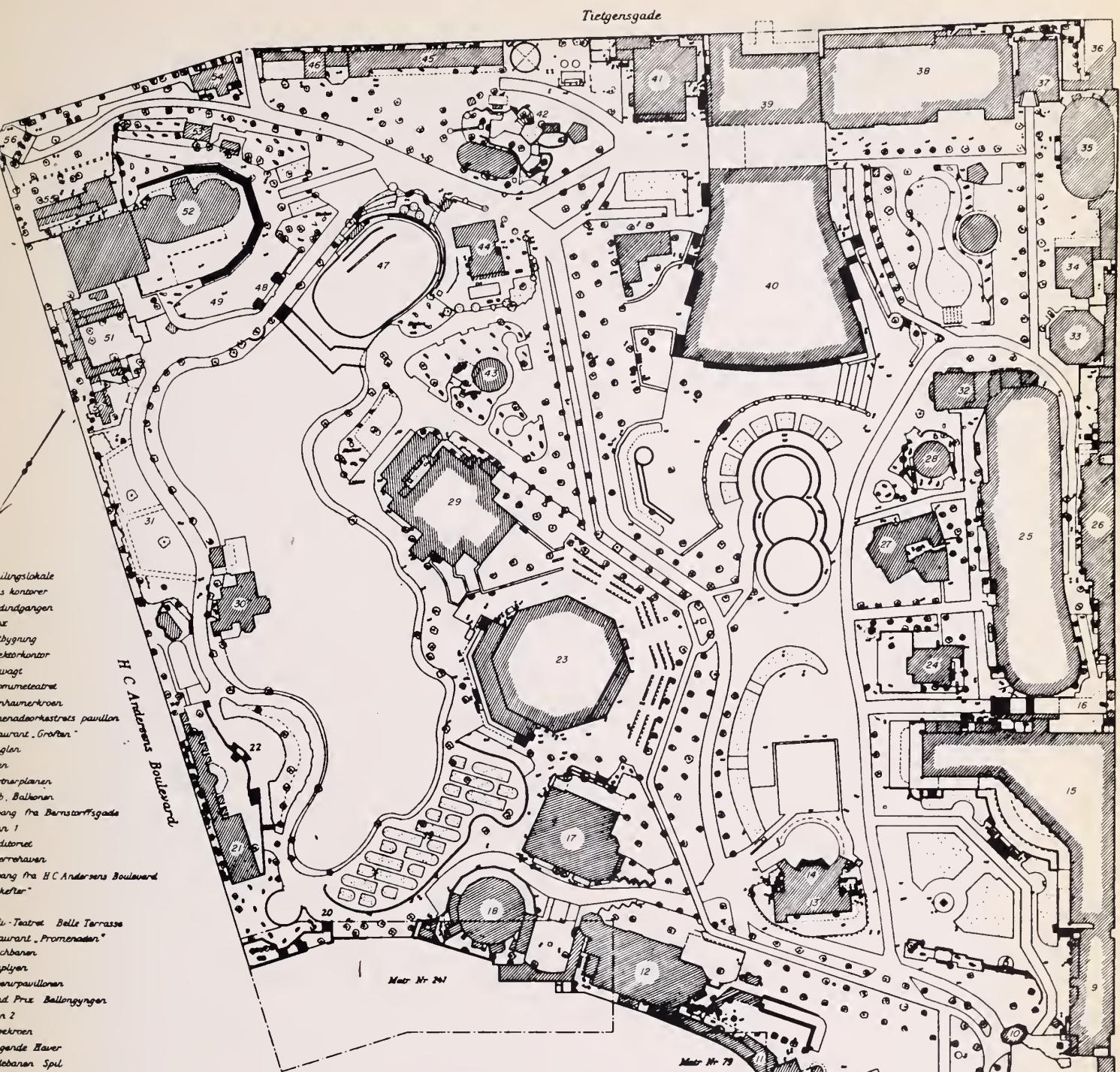
#### Proposed Plan

Broad Channel's more than 320 acres of land and marsh offer possibilities for several kinds of recreational development. If we assume that all the land under water within its mapped bulkhead lines is fillable, then the potential area may be increased to about 500 acres.



It is proposed that the hub of this development be a commercial recreation park similar to Pacific Ocean Park in Santa Monica, California or to Tivoli in Copenhagen, Denmark, combining features of both of these and other parks like them. The proposed commercial recreation area would be an adjunct to





# TIVOLI

Mat. Nr. 183  
Vestervold Kvarter

Udfordiget i april 1957

*S. P. Blichfeldt  
Landsgæster*

1:1000  
0 10 20 30 40 50 m

## Signatur:

- = Hovedbygning
- = Meldebygning med res.
- = Meldebygning
- = Vand-hovedsæperværel.
- = Vand-hovedsæperværel.
- = Brandhuse
- = Lygespil.
- = Stæuse
- = Mur
- = Stælk
- = Markværk
- = Lavende høje
- = Trædræg
- = Stensædning
- = Inddelt omr.
- = Busheds
- = Bed

Vesterbrogade



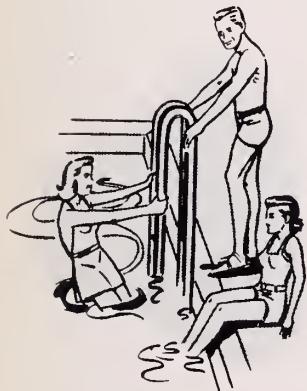
other attractions and not an isolated facility like Freedomland. Santa Monica's Pacific Ocean Park now consists of 32 acres on the oceanfront. Immediately adjacent to this commercial facility is a substantial expanse of public beach. Attendance figures for the 1961 season for Pacific Ocean Park totalled 1,600,000 persons. Copenhagen has a population of about 1.5 million, but during a season attendance at Tivoli is between 4 and 5 million, with often more than 50,000 in the course of a single day. Tivoli occupies an area of only about 20 acres; and though located in the center of the city this park nevertheless suggests a number of ideas that may be borrowed for Broad Channel.

These two highly successful commercial parks offer a number of attractive facilities, one set often quite different from the other, which could be easily adapted for a park on Broad Channel. Some of the attractions are described in Appendix A and Appendix B attached to this memorandum. There is room on Broad Channel for all the suitable facilities to be borrowed from these sources and more.

In addition, Broad Channel could provide some of the familiar attractions popular in our own resort areas. A network of boating facilities covering Jamaica Bay and its surrounding areas could tie in with the facilities proposed for Broad Channel for a variety of activities, such as fishing, birdwatching, nature study, picnicking and boating per se. If it is considered desirable, the usability of the other islands might be increased by outfitting them for picnicking with benches and tables, fireplaces, and boat docks. A



marina on Broad Channel offering facilities for both private and rented boats would be part of the plan. Conceivably boats could be hired here for visiting all parts of the area. Also, as the parks bordering Jamaica Bay - such as Spring Creek Park, Canarsie Beach Park, and Marine Park - are developed, perhaps boats might be hired there also for these marine activities as well as for going to Broad Channel by water. A ferry service, similar to that now used for transportation to Fire Island, might be established also to connect these points on the main shoreline with Broad Channel.



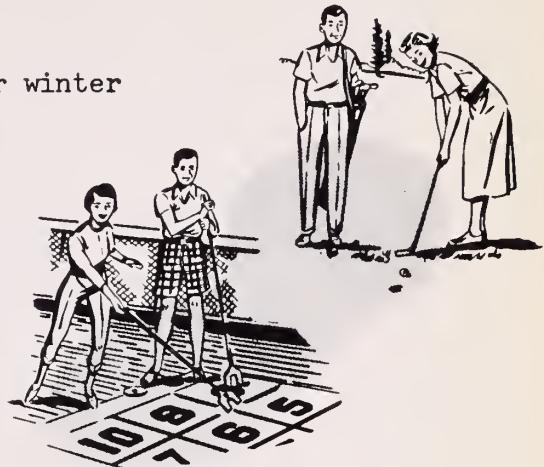
The island offers several possibilities for the development of much-needed swimming facilities, and ultimately all might be used here. Until the waters of Jamaica Bay have been rid of pollution, pools or perhaps some type of salt water lake could answer this purpose. At present there are two large pools used in connection with the Broad Channel Day Camp. Eventually beach areas can undoubtedly be expected on Broad Channel. The Park Department now has a long-range plan for developing public beaches here when the pollution problem has been disposed of.

There will be space for still further facilities that are favorites with New Yorkers. Shuffleboard, tennis, softball, bocci, skating, bowling, a parachute drop and other acceptable amusement park facilities could all be offered. An attractive full-scale 9-hole



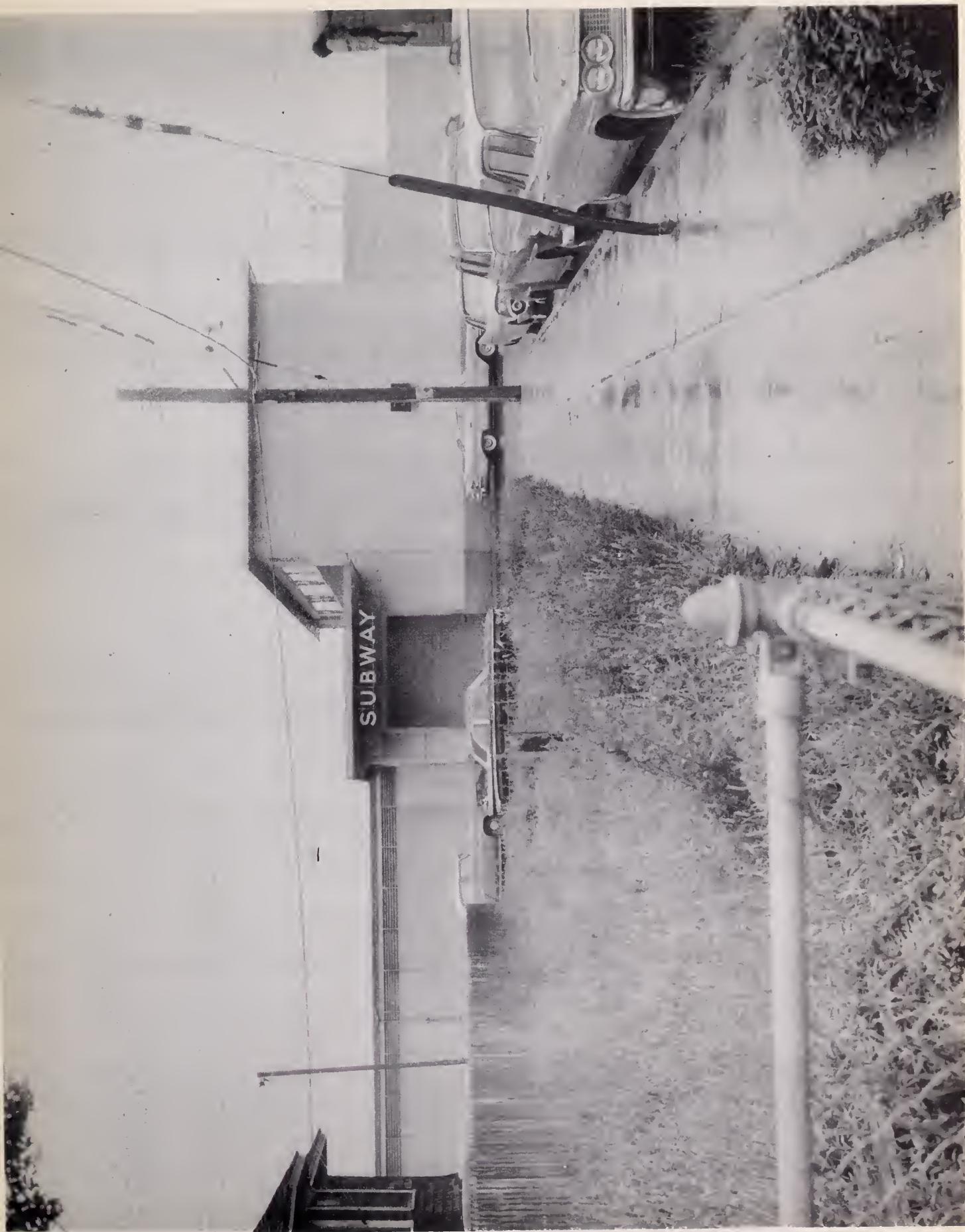
golf course, made interesting by the use of waterhole obstacles, might also be considered.

Broad Channel would be attractive for winter recreation also. Restaurants, dancing, theatre, and facilities for ice-skating, bowling, indoor swimming, and the like could be used all year round. Solaria for both indoor and outdoor winter sunning would have appeal for many New Yorkers. Outdoors, an area protected from the wind and faced to catch the best of the sun's rays, offering deck chairs and blankets a-la-Atlantic City, would be attractive to many people.



The existing transportation facilities are excellent and advantageous, and would coordinate well with the proposals made here. Cross Bay Boulevard is a six-lane artery varying in width from 110 to 150 feet. The Broad Channel station of the IND rapid transit line can easily be adapted to serve as many passengers as necessary. This station also is a logical stop on the way to and from the Rockaways. When the Broad Channel beach development has been completed it can help to relieve the Rockaway bathing facilities, although such beach area could not substitute adequately for prime oceanfront.





11. IND subway station.





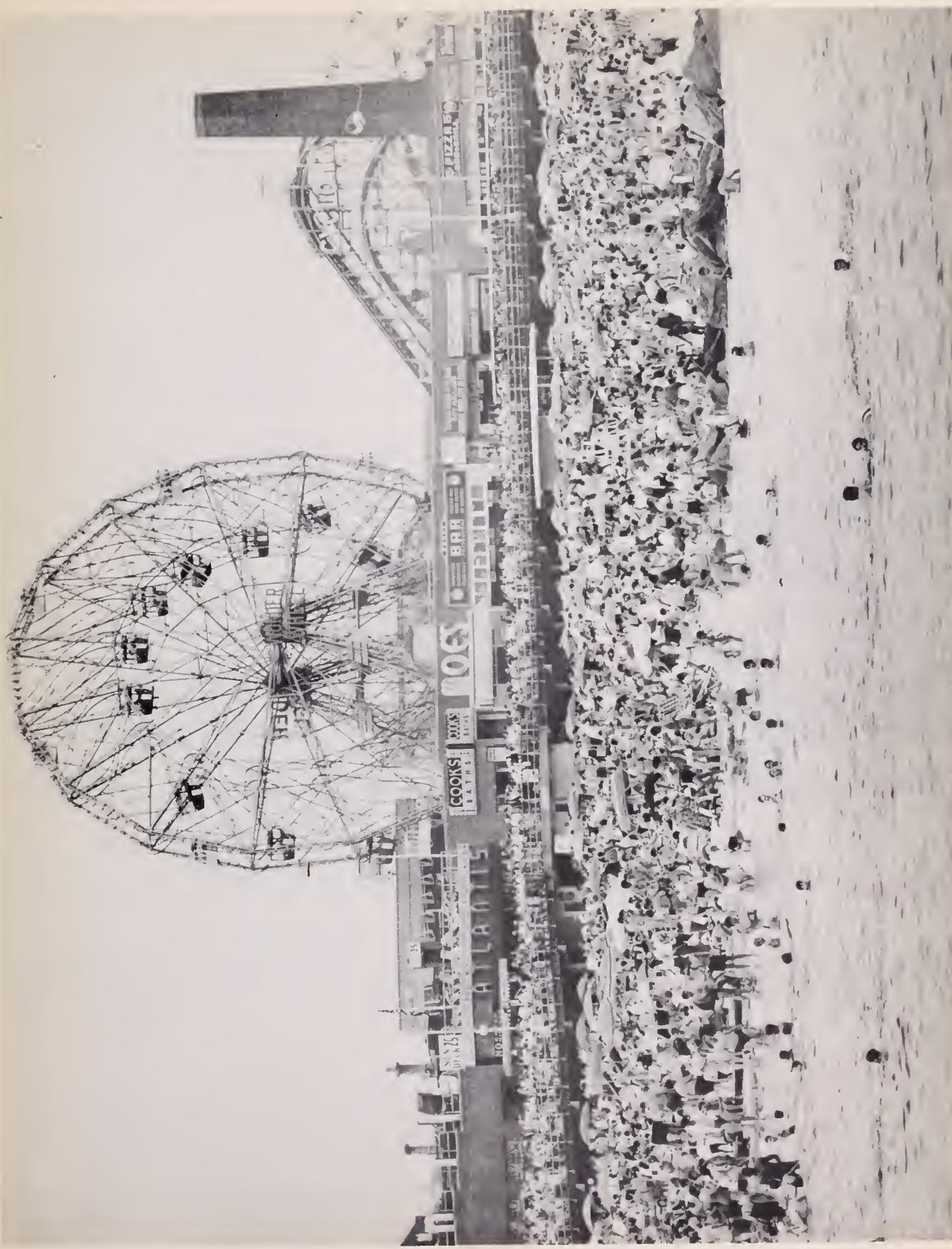
12. Cross Bay Boulevard.



The potentialities offered by Broad Channel in a number of ways seem to reach out into various kinds of opportunities for the City, not only within this island itself but also through the effect on other areas as well. The Broad Channel recreation area will offer adequate and improved facilities that will do much to complement those now in the City's other recreation areas where renewal action has been indicated. It is conceivable that, over a period of time, the planned commercial recreation facilities at Broad Channel might replace those at Coney Island and the Rockaways which are now obsolete, crowded, and wedged in among conflicting uses; and thus release space there to back up those critically inadequate beaches with sorely needed parking areas and bathhouses and other facilities. A brief survey reveals that along the oceanfront at least 30 acres in Coney Island and about 4.5 acres in Rockaway's Playland are now occupied by such inappropriate amusement facilities.

Fiscally, the proposal for Broad Channel makes sense also. The proposed development will not only pay its own way, but it will also be a new and sound source of revenue to the City as well. If the development is publicly owned, the assumption is that there will be fees for the various admissions, parking and other services, in addition to sales and admissions taxes. If it is privately-owned, the City can expect considerable revenue in real estate taxes and gross sales taxes besides the sales and admissions taxes. In either event the revenue will be substantially in excess of what the City now receives from Broad Channel.





General view of crowded Coney Island.



As a very general indication of the income the City might expect from a privately-owned commercial recreation facility here, an example based on Pacific Ocean Park might be considered. That Park, which would be comparable to only a part of the development proposed for Broad Channel, cost \$15 million. Assuming an assessment of perhaps \$10 million, at a tax rate of about \$4.20 this would produce real estate taxes of \$420,000 a year, in addition to gross receipts, sales and admissions taxes, and increases in transit use.

As now used it is obvious that Broad Channel pays no where near its own way. Even though the buildings are assessed at a total of \$2,642,200 for the non-exempt properties, the City receives no income from them other than the rents and water and refuse collection charges which for the coming year will total \$123,757.71, and the minor metered water payments.

Upon expiration of the present leases on April 30, 1963, it is recommended that at the maximum they be renewed from year to year. Preferably, starting with the expiration date. it might be feasible for any continued rentals to be on a month-to-month basis.

It is entirely feasible that some of the present uses might be retained and integrated into the proposed recreational development. The Broad Channel Day Camp, for example, would probably be quite suitable and adaptable to the proposed plan.

The new recreational development could be staged so as to be in phase with the necessary relocation and thus permit removal to be gradual over a period of time. The possibility of continuing some occupancies on the basis of life tenancy might be explored.



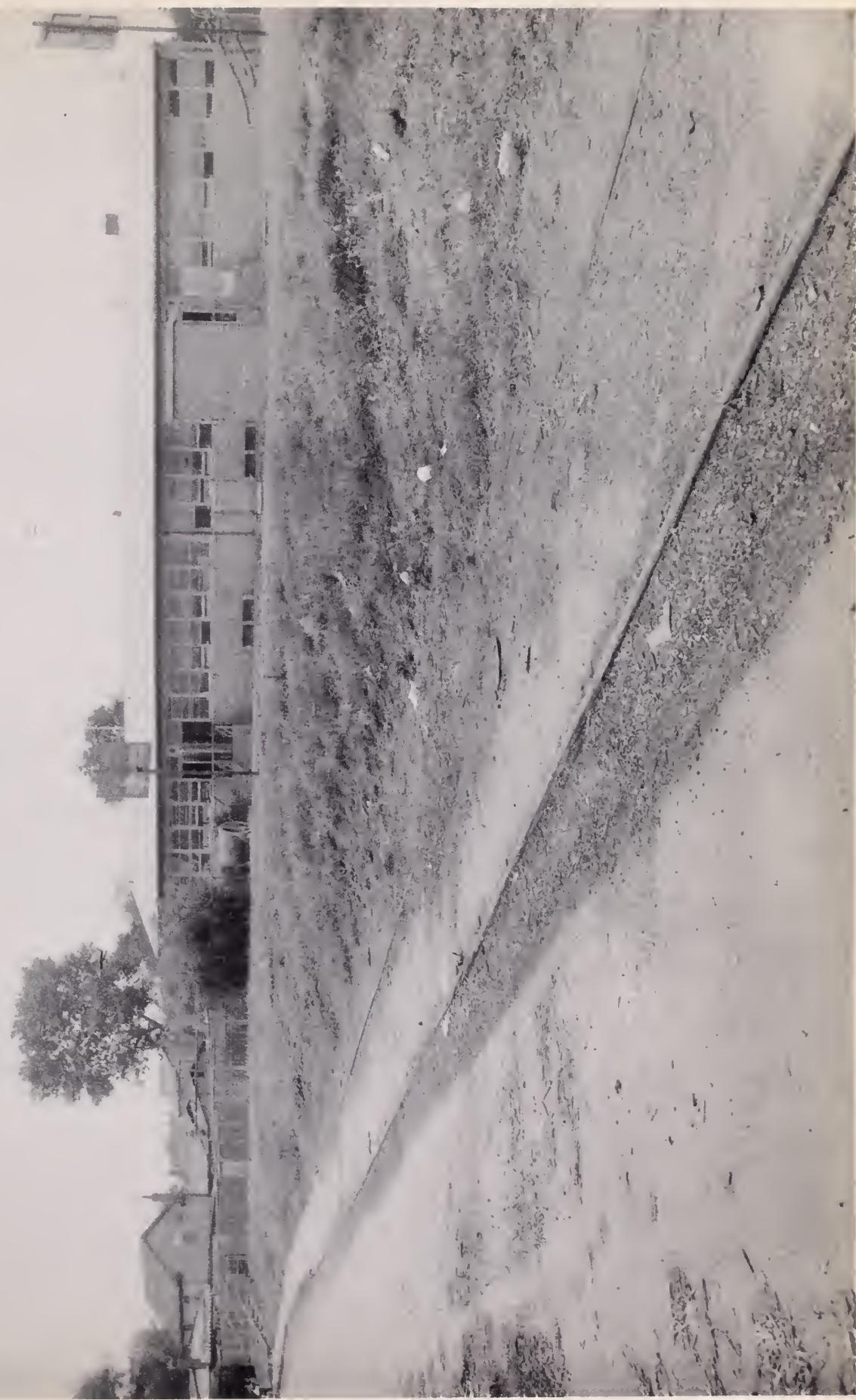
In view of the fact that the median income here for families is about the same as that in the City as a whole, it would appear that there would be no undue hardship on the residents in finding other accommodations. Indeed, for families plus unrelated individuals the median income here is nine per cent higher than in the City as a whole.

With respect to the residential relocation, there are several alternatives. Should any of the residents wish to move their houses to other sites this might be done relatively easily since they have no cellars. Land is available in nearby areas. According to the 1960 census, there were parcels of vacant land totalling about 475 acres in the Rockaways and 400 acres in the Howard Beach section. While some of this has undoubtedly been used by now, a considerable portion is probably still vacant. Norton Basin on the Rockaway peninsula, for example, is largely vacant.

In the Rockaways considerable housing construction is in progress and planned. 3,600 Title I publicly-aided housing units are under construction and will be ready for occupancy in the Fall of 1963. 2,328 of these are apartments that will rent for approximately \$32 per month per room, and 1,332 are cooperative units on which the down payment will be about \$530 and the carrying charge approximately \$25 monthly per room. In addition, the New York City Housing Authority recently proposed a project which may provide up to 875 new units in the section of the Rockaways that lies immediately south of Broad Channel, adjacent to the exit from the bridge leading from it.

The City-owned structure which now houses Public School 47 could easily be converted to use for administrative purposes connected with







the proposed recreational development. This one-story brick building, which was completed in 1957 at a cost of about \$352,000, contains about 6,500 square feet of floor space and is located on a site of 45,242 square feet.

Comment:

The deterioration, substandard conditions, and inadequacy of the present residential development on Broad Channel result from a multiplicity of factors an element of which is ownership of the island by the City of New York and the uncertainty surrounding its future. Some reasons for the existing marginal use may stem from inertia or negligence on the part of homeowners. However, basically a combination of circumstances inherent in the City's ownership inadvertently has contributed to the perpetuation of a substandard residential area here. Because the owners' leaseholds repeatedly have been subject to termination after 5-year terms, money-lending institutions are reported to have refused to grant loans for improving the properties. Indeed, because of the uncertainty of their tenure homeowners themselves who may have had the funds are reported to have been reluctant to invest in what might be a temporary home. Thus, the uncertainty together with the low ground rent and low maintenance costs paid by the resident owners, the low revenue received by the City, and the inability or infeasibility of making improvements, all have become part of a complex that has served to stymy efficiency, growth, and development initiative on this island. Appropriate action by the City is the only way of



breaking the circle.

So far as the future of Broad Channel is concerned, there appear to be three alternatives for New York City:

1. Renew the leases again. This would perpetuate the uncertainty that hangs over the island.
2. Sell the land to the homeowners, so that financing might be made available for improving the properties and bringing them up to minimum standards. A benefit to the City from this action would be the fact that the properties would then become fully taxable on the basis of assessed valuations of both land and buildings. Such an action, however, may be inconsistent with Land Bank principles.
3. Replace the present marginal use of the island with recreational development. Other kinds of non-residential activity here would be inappropriate.

As to the third alternative, obviously the most difficult problem would be that of relocation. From an economic standpoint, even assuming acquisition by the City of the privately owned structures at two times their present assessed valuations, such costs would then be in the neighborhood of \$5 million for the non-exempt properties. Some of the buildings might be moved to new locations at less expense than acquisition would involve. Others might be utilized as part of the proposed recreational re-use, thereby offsetting acquisition costs.



With respect to relocation, it is evident that there are political implications which might conflict with planning considerations. In deference to these, life estates appear to offer a logical solution consistent with long-range planning objectives. Through this device the interest and equity of the present owners could be assured over a sufficiently long period of time to amortize any holdings of reasonable economic value. At the same time, the City's interest in the future of the island would be protected and made clear. With code enforcement, an adequate level of maintenance could be established which would meet the needs both of the residents and of the City.

The third alternative is most strongly recommended, and we urge that immediate action be taken to implement the proposals for the recreational development recommended in this report.



FOOTNOTES

1/ The Race for Open Space, final report of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Project of the Tri-State New York Metropolitan Region, Regional Plan Association, September, 1960, p. 60.

2/ Ibid.

3/ Ibid., p. 33.

4/ Clawson, Marion, The Dynamics of Park Demand, Regional Plan Association, 1960, the second report of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Project.

5/ The Race for Open Space, op cit, p. 18.

6/ Ibid, p. 39.

7/ Ibid, p. 59.

8/ Ibid, p. 60.



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# P.O.P.

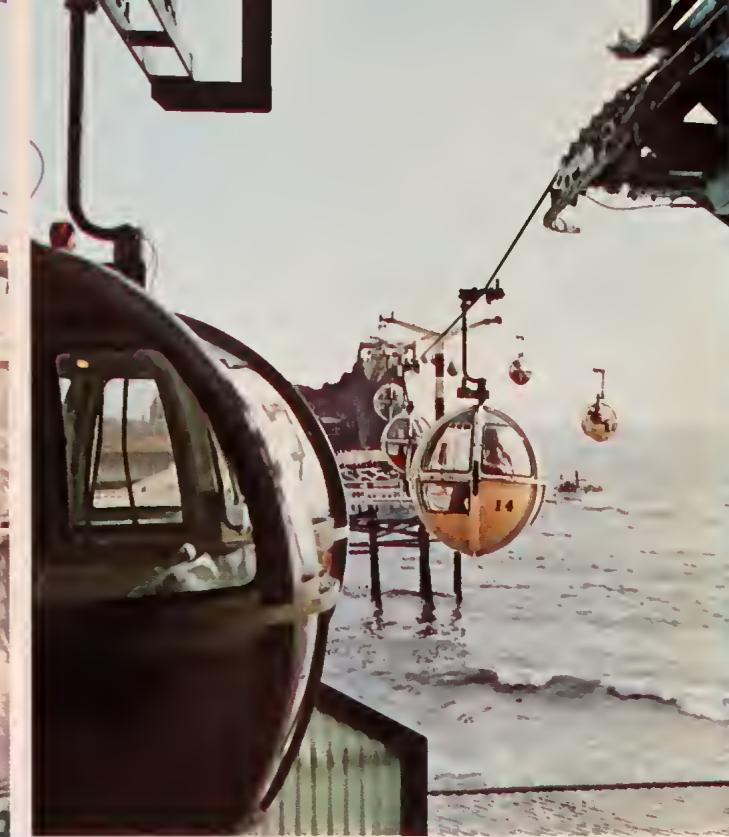
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## APPENDIX A



The fabulous playland is located on one of the most picturesque bays in America, on the beautiful beach at Santa Monica, California.



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Appendix B

Facilities Available at Tivoli,  
Copenhagen, Denmark

1. Eating places. Featured are 23 different restaurants offering a wide range of choice as to type and price, indoors and outdoors, as for example: distinguished establishments with an international cuisine, intimate places with their own specialties, pleasant cafes, popular pubs, self-service restaurants, beer gardens, bodegas, and bars.
2. Acrobats and jugglers.
3. Cabarets and dancing.
4. Roundabouts, "dodgems," shooting galleries, etc.
5. The Alley. Features souvenir booths with curious old signs.
6. Theatre, concerts, ballet, music, puppets.



This land use proposal for Broad Channel was prepared by staff members of the Office of Master Planning in response to a directive from the Executive Director of the Department of City Planning.

The Office of Master Planning acknowledges with thanks the cooperation of Mr. Edward Smith, Real Estate Manager of the Department of Real Estate, in supplying factual data and photographs used in the preparation of this report.

